

9/1/2023

Dear Mike,

Well, you certainly managed to blow my mind the other night. But I hope this brings you both joy, happiness and fulfillment.

I'm a little sad that you felt you had to keep this to yourself all these years. Of course, I totally understand why, but what a burden! But, as you well know, I know all about secrets and keeping hid the things that continually haunt on a daily basis. It's not a good thing. I hope that the reaction of myself, your mom and your other friends taught you that you don't have to do that again--no matter what. It is simply never worth it. I thought your mom's reaction was great. When Kerry had his kid, his parent's reaction was the same. Of course it was a different thing, but he didn't get married, so in that sense it was similar. But to his parents, it was a grandson. Of course there are unfortunately the people who don't react that way. But as you said the other night, those who accept it will accept it and offer their support, and the other people -- well forget about them! Sadly, this is a good way to find out who your friends *really* are. But in my experience, I found out that the people you thought were your friends really are your friends.

But as your friend, and the main reason for this letter is there's one thing that I'm a little concerned about. I figure after all this time and the fact that we have been able to have deep talks (which I am very grateful for) that I know you pretty well. And the thing that concerns me is this: When you go out there, please don't feel bad that you don't have a lot of money and you work in a record store. And I'm only writing this because I *know* how you feel about it. Remember that you are a musician first. (Actually you're a person first, but I think you know what I mean.) I'm sure you would love to give her all kinds of things and are probably frustrated that you won't be able to. But -- and I know you know this -- the most important thing you can give her is you. And knowing you the way I do, I know you'll have wonderful things to share.

I know you haven't (yet) achieved the things you want to as a musician and I know how it drives you crazy because you've told me, and I know how it drives me crazy in my life (not to mention that it drives me crazy that things don't happen for you and my other friends that I love and care about). But some of these things are not in your control any more than they are in my control.

I get a lot of e-mails from people (I don't know) who've picked up or discovered my album. And they all say something along the lines of "what a noble thing it is that you write songs and create." I usually write back and say, "yeah well, it would be nice if I was making some money." And they write back immediately saying, "no, what you're doing is something special."

So, please man, keep that in mind, because whether you write a lot of songs or not, every time you pick up your bass, or a mandolin, or hit the drums, or any of the other instruments you play, you are creating.

I *know* you know this stuff.

So when you go out there, don't think about money, don't think about forties-mid-life shit, don't think about what you haven't done or achieved. Show her the really good person that is you and the great love that I know you have inside you. Share with her the wisdom you've accumulated (and don't you dare try to deny this, 'cause you're one of the wisest people I know) and turn her on the wonders of music and other things you know.

I think you know what I'm attempting to say here. But knowing how you go up and down in your estimation of yourself, I figured a little reminder of who you really are wouldn't hurt either,